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3 December 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Administration)  
FROM: Chief, Medical Staff  
SUBJECT: Medical Communications

1. Certain major activities of operations require the direct support of medical personnel. Such personnel are assigned at widely separate geographic areas either singly or as members of very small staffs. The nature of such assignment results in a degree of professional isolation uncommon to medical practice.

Competent medical practice requires the availability of consultative opinion, the guidance of specialist support and the maintenance of current information and developments.

Lack of such support in the field increases the responsibility of headquarters to provide the same within the limits of its capabilities. A system of medical communication is therefore required.

2. It is considered desirable that the system of communication consist of a direct channel between medical field personnel and medical headquarters. It is believed that a direct channel would best preserve those characteristics of medicine that are of a personal, vital or technical nature. The governing policy for use of such a channel should ensure message coordination with non-medical authorities, however, consideration should also be given to those instances when confidential communication between members of the profession is desirable. In either event, it is essential that the message be not subject to change in regard content or delivery.

3. It is, therefore, recommended that:

a. The cable indicator "M" (Medical) be added to the Basic Cable Procedure.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

b. The authority for release of "M" cables be vested in the Chief, Medical Staff, his Deputy, and the senior medical officer of each field station.

c. The "M" channel be reserved as a professional channel of communications for the transmittal of medical information between the Medical Staff headquarters and field station medical officers and will not be an authorized channel for the transmittal of operational information.

d. When appropriate, "M" cables will be coordinated with other elements of CIA both at headquarters and in the field but will not require release for transmittal other than by those officers stated in 3b above.

e. The distribution procedure for "M" cables will provide that the Medical Staff or the senior field medical officer will receive the action copies and information copies will be distributed to other elements of CIA as appropriate.

JOHN R. TIETJEN, M. D.

MO/JRT:njc

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